

World vision. Background document.

I am writing this document to give an answer to the question “Why a world vision?” These are my personal prophetic views, and have to be tested and evaluated. Having accepted the need for testing, I’m just going to write freely, and leave readers to test and check.

The world in 2007

Prophets are basically pessimists! We have had thousands of years of being ignored, ridiculed, mocked, ejected and killed, so we are pessimistic with good reason! I don’t think the church should see this as a negative virtue. We are not swept along with our own rhetoric, and don’t believe the things people say about us. We are basically sceptical of big claims, big and powerful institutions, organisations of any kind, and big powerful individual charismatic figures. We are cautious of those who would promote us, knowing from very bitter experience that today’s friend is tomorrow’s enemy. We live on the fringe of church life, preferring our own and the Lord’s company. We speak what we have spoken to us, but only a fraction of what we receive do we share.

At the end of the day, if God is satisfied with us, then we have little concern for what others think. At the same time, we must remain humble and submissive to the body of Christ. Ultimately, our function is to share the heart of God with him, and very occasionally with this world. We do not expect quick change, preferring to speak words which are timeless, allowing God to apply them in his own good time.

That’s quite a long introduction, but I think it is helpful to lay out my own pattern of ministry, as I begin this document. I hope it doesn’t look too pompous!

9/11

The world of 2007 has to be viewed from the world of September 11th 2001. Before that time we were in one spiritual environment, and after it we were in another one. Here’s the news report:-

“The September 11, 2001 attacks consisted of a series of coordinated terrorist suicide attacks by Islamic extremists on the United States on September 11, 2001. The victims were predominantly civilians.

On the morning of September 11, 2001, nineteen terrorists affiliated with al-Qaeda hijacked four commercial passenger jet airliners . Each team of hijackers included a trained pilot. The hijackers crashed two of the airliners into the World Trade Centre in New York City, one plane into each tower, resulting in the collapse of both buildings soon afterward. A nearby church and the rest of the World Trade Centre complex's 7 buildings were also destroyed or damaged beyond repair. A third airliner was crashed into the Pentagon in Arlington County, Virginia. Passengers and members of the flight crew on the fourth aircraft attempted to retake control of their plane from the hijackers; that plane crashed into a field near the town of Shanksville in rural Somerset County, Pennsylvania. In addition to the 19 hijackers, 2,973 people died; another 24 are missing and presumed dead.”

Before this event, Islam was already growing at a very fast rate. It had already been estimated that by 2020, Muslims would outnumber Christians for the first time in world history, simply by biological growth. Many Western countries were feeling the pressure of Islam. Most of Europe was finding this an increasing pressure. Enabled by their oil, Middle Eastern Muslim countries were embarked on a tough evangelisation programme of mosque, school and hospital building, especially in the developing world. Christian missionary organisations were the first to feel the effect of this, but now it is evident in the developed world. Muslim groups were pushing for schools, special consideration, the wearing of the veil, special assemblies in schools, political groupings and in some cases, Sharia law.

The Christian church did what it usually does in these circumstances – it went to sleep. No amount of urging, prophesying or writing could wake the church up to what was happening. I suppose most of the Christians in the developed world believed that everything would be alright. That was because they had not studied the Quran, and did not understand the umma, or community of world wide Islam, nor the vision of a totally Muslim world, which, though it had been around for centuries, had laid dormant since Saladin. The umma was stirring, fuelled by fundamentalist Islam, a weak developed world government and church, and vast amounts of oil money.

I am not anti Muslim people. I do know the difference between fundamentalist Islam and mainstream Islam, and I do know that the moderate Islamic people are in the majority, and like me, want to promote their faith but to do it in peace and harmony. Unfortunately, these moderate voices are not being heard. Powerful forces in the West want the fundamentalist voice to be heard. They have adopted the old adage, “He who shouts the loudest gets heard” Politicians, often untaught about Islam, are afraid of these strident voices and seek to pacify them at any price.

So, prior to 9/11, the situation was serious, but not yet explosive. Then came the incident of 9/11. The spiritual consequences were massive:-

1. Islam had now proved that it had the capacity to seriously hurt the one remaining super power in the world.
2. Islamic views had massive mainstream TV coverage.
3. Muslim leaders were seen publicly standing beside world leaders. Many stood in Downing Street, beside Mr Blair, as he condemned the attacks. They nodded sagely, but I waited for him to ask them about their attacks and confinements on Christians in the Muslim world. Would he, and they condemn these? I waited in vain.
4. Islam received a major boost to its cause. Muslim views now had a major place on the world agenda. Islam had arrived.

We have been living with the consequences of this spiritual sea change ever since 9/11. Now Islam has gained a new confidence, and a new direction. It can now settle down to its aim of creating an Islamic world.

Oil

Other issues have also forced themselves onto the world stage, most noticeably oil.

Oil is not just commodity which we in the West use in vast quantities. It is the fuel which drives our culture. Muslims control the largest sources of oil, and now know its riches and its political and spiritual power. Islam believes in world domination, and sees the oil as Allah's chosen provision to make that possible. This may look simple from their perspective but it is not so simple as it seems. Oil, the need for it and the control of it masks a struggle between two cultures - the "Christian", and the Muslim. (I put "Christian" in quotes because in many Western countries we are a post Christian society, living with the views and principles of the Christian era.) The "Christian" culture is built on individual choice, freedom of religion and materialism. Islam is built on the mandate from the Quran to Islamise the world, establish the Umma, and live under Sharia law, where all of life is regulated by the Quran and the Hadiths.

These two cultures are incompatible. Ultimately the struggle will be explosive and conclusive, unless one side backs down. This makes for a very flammable environment. But this is not a cultural but a spiritual issue - at least it is for Islam and should be for Christianity. However, many (most?) of our politicians and world leaders don't see it in this way. But they do see their power being striped away if they lose control of the oil.

Iraq

Iraq has brought a massive change into the spiritual environment. The Americans have fought and failed in Iraq. At last, Islam has demonstrated to itself that it has the power to defeat America in the military sphere. That is why extremists are flocking to fight in Iraq. They see that to defeat the U.S.A. here will tip the balance of the world in their favour. President Bush and his advisors have done what Islam has failed to do for centuries - they have energised and reinvigorated Islam, and shown it that the door is wide open. Spiritually the world is in great peril now. What can possibly stop this rampant force from sweeping all before it.

Israel

Israel has been seen as a very strong ally of America, and a powerful military force in the Middle East. Recently it released its military might against Lebanon, and de facto against Hamas, one of the Palestinian groups supported by Iran. (See the Islam page on the website serving-africa.org) Yet for all its power, it could not bomb Hamas into submission. The F15's strafed Hamas positions, and back came the rockets into Israel. This is yet another vital spiritual issue. Hamas now knows that Israel cannot defeat it with military might. The door is open. The consequences of this have yet to show themselves, but they will be serious.

Iran, Russia, China?

The powerful Islamic state of Iran is a real threat to the spiritual world. It is building a nuclear facility, and despite all that the West has been able to do, it continues to build

this facility. The general consensus is that within two to three years, Iran will be a nuclear power. What a phenomenal boost to the Islamic cause this will be. Israel's response may be very serious - there are suggestions that Israel will attack these nuclear facilities. But can it?

Not only has its failure against Hamas proved the fallibility of the Israeli military machine, but Iran is already threatening to stop oil deliveries to the West if such an attack takes place. Oil again will be the key in this scenario.

Russia is now in play again, using its oil and gas supplies to threaten the West into doing what it wants in its former empire. China, a vast nation, is rising up again, and there is certainly much satanic in that country, which can be released against us.

Dangerous days

In the spiritual places, there is much disturbance and unease. Intercessors can feel the spiritual uncertainty, the battle, the darkness growing stronger. Since 9/11, the heavenly places have been very disturbed and uncomfortable. Prophets feel that some great crisis is coming on us - a kairos of the Lord's making, a shaking, a pruning. Perhaps we are even in an end times scenario.

It's common for every generation to say that the days they are living in are more difficult or dangerous than those of the previous generations. But I sense that for us, this is not so. I feel, and fear that we are approaching a spiritual upheaval that hasn't visited the planet for centuries, perhaps even for thousands of years. The sky is very dark. The battle is close. The unbelievers are wandering around as they did in the days of Noah, and the people of God are unprepared.

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